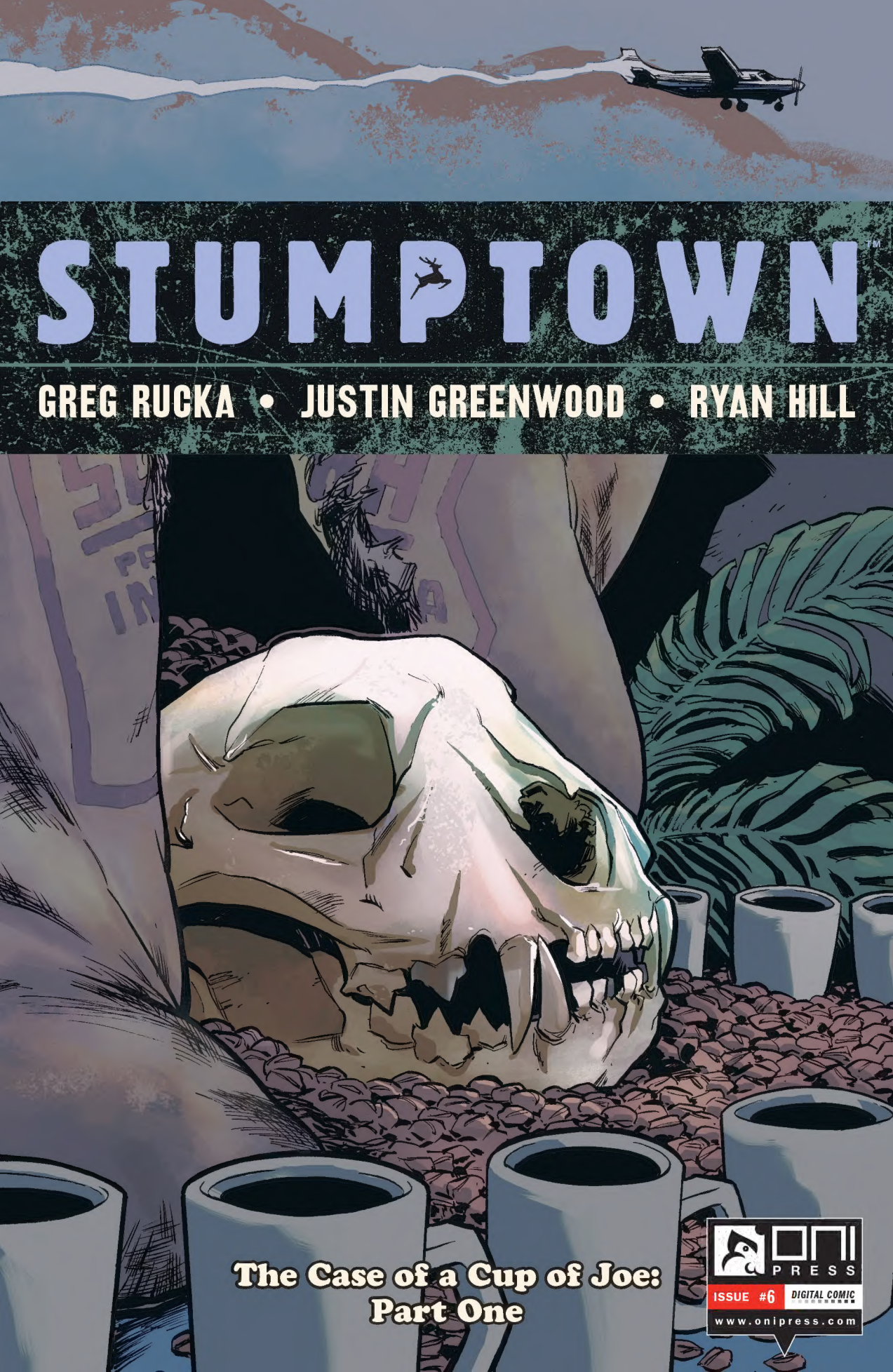
STUMPTOWN
GREG RUCKA • JUSTIN GREENWOOD • RYAN HILL
The Case of a Cup of Joe:
Part One
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written by
GREG RUCKA

illustrated by
JUSTIN GREENWOOD

colored by
RYAN HILL

lettered by
CRANK!

edited by
JAMES LUCAS JONES and ARI YARWOOD

designed by
JASON STOREY

STUMPTOWN™

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publisher JOE NOZEMACK editor in chief JAMES LUCAS JONES director of sales CHEYENNE ALLOTT
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production assistant JARED JONES senior editor CHARLIE CHU editor ROBIN HERRERA associate editor ARI YARWOOD
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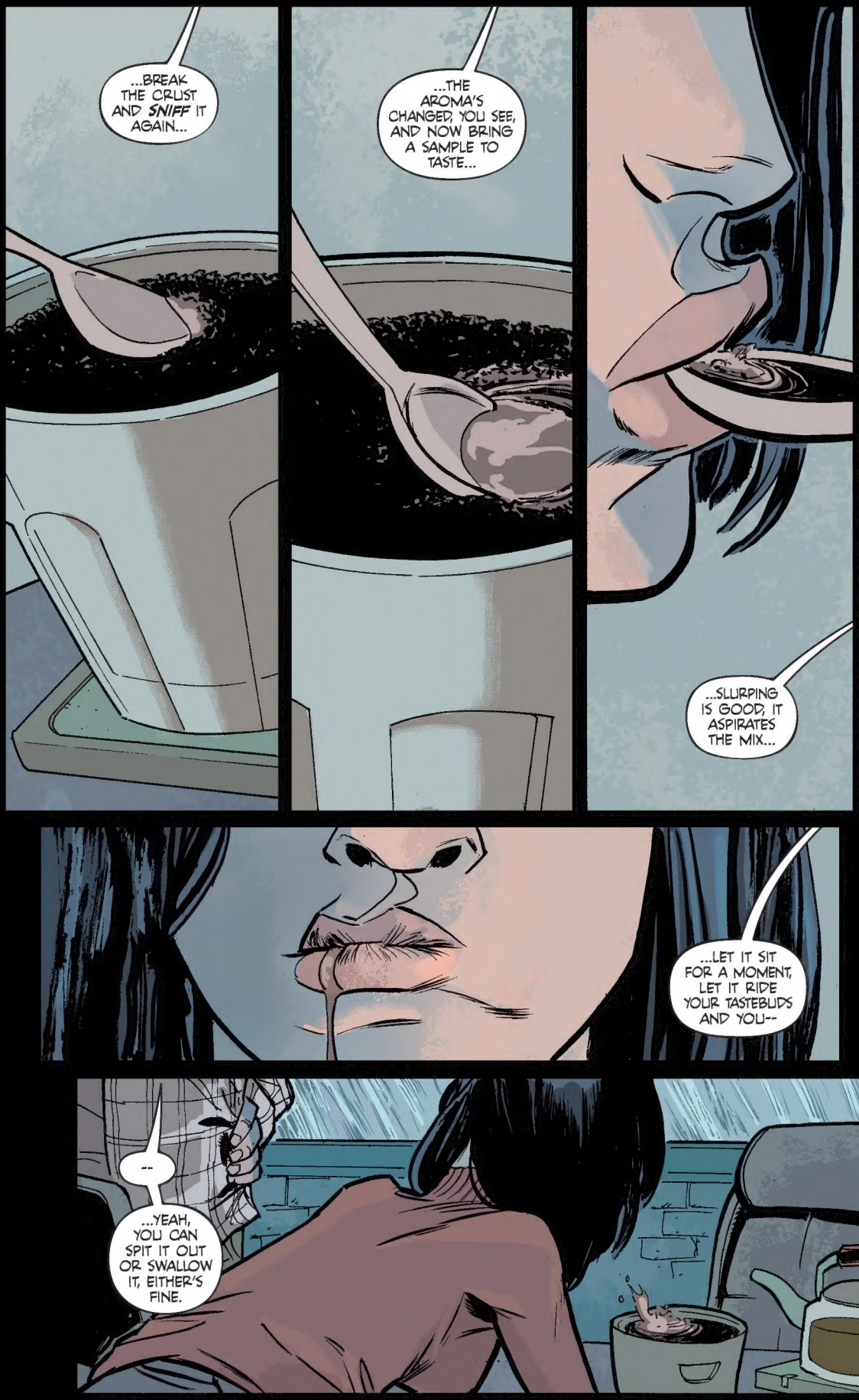
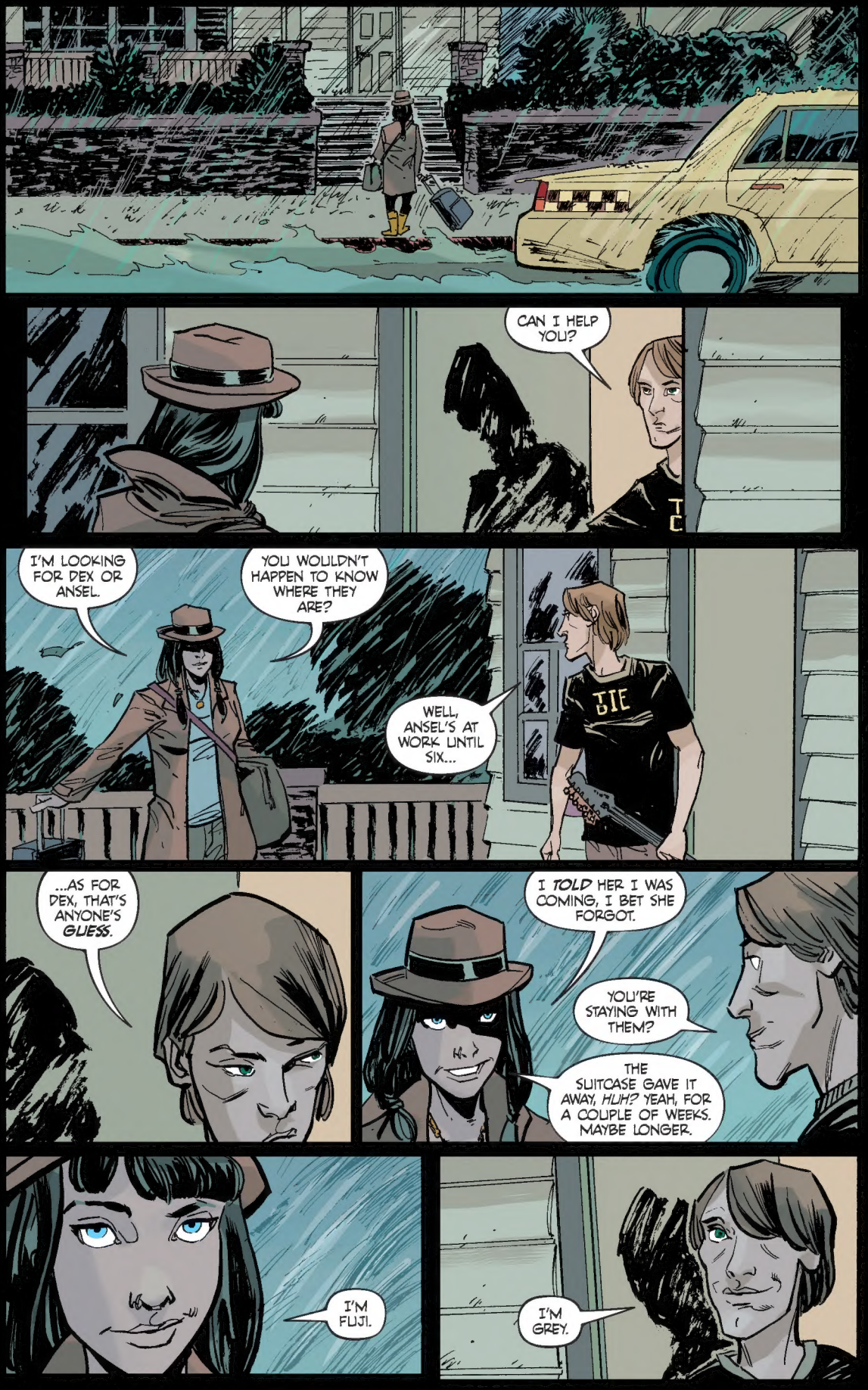

...BREAK THE CRUST AND SNIFF IT AGAIN...
...THE AROMA'S CHANGED, YOU SEE, AND NOW BRING A SAMPLE TO TASTE...
...SLURPING IS GOOD, IT ASPIRATES THE MIX...
...LET IT SIT FOR A MOMENT, LET IT RIDE YOUR TASTEBUDS AND YOU--
--
...YEAH, YOU CAN SPIT IT OUT OR SWALLOW IT, EITHER'S FINE.

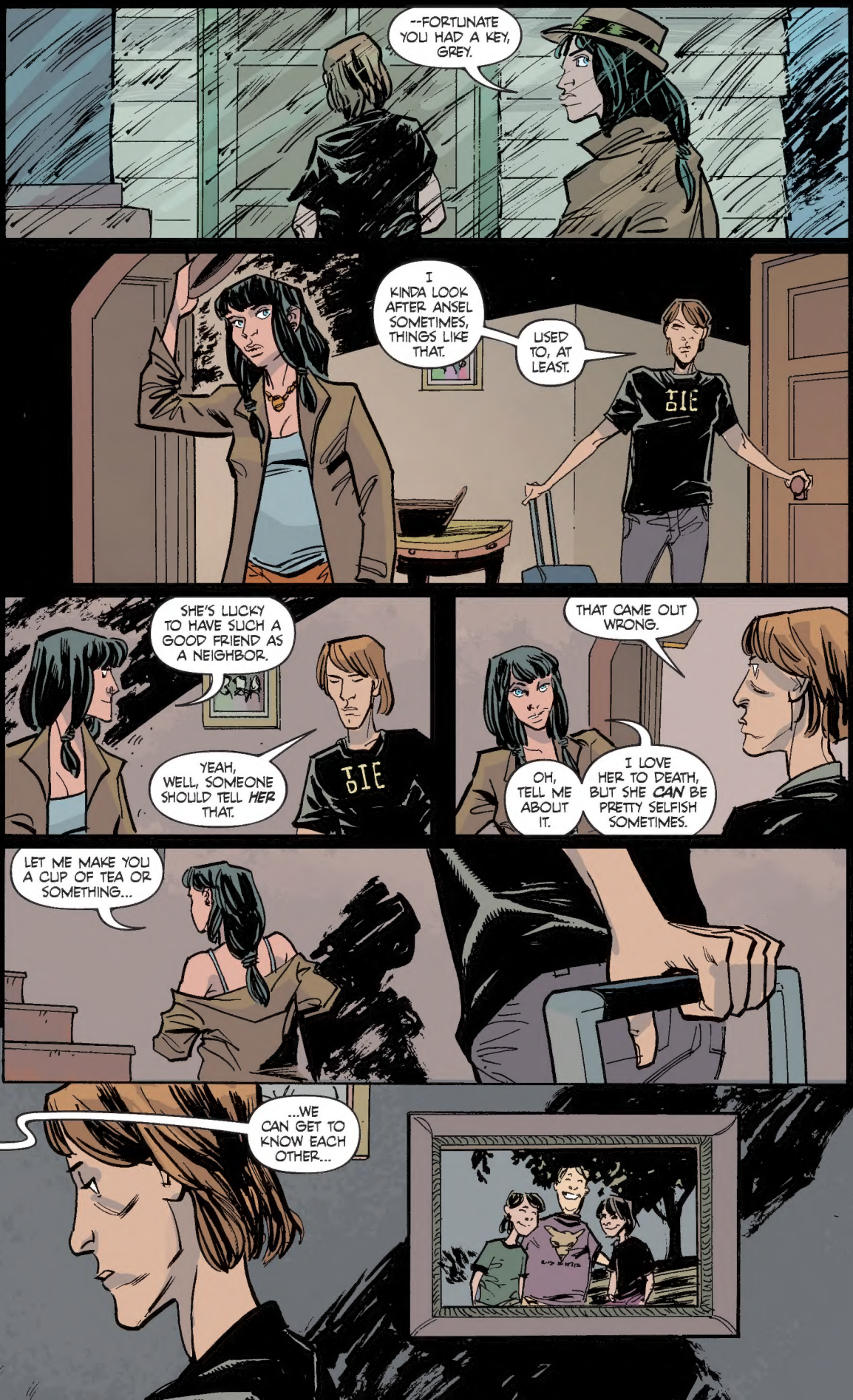
SO?
WHAT'D YOU *THINK?*
I THINK IT TASTES LIKE *COFFEE*, MISTER WEEKES.
GOOD COFFEE, BUT... Y'KNOW, *COFFEE*.
HEATHEN.
YOU'RE A *HEATHEN*, PARIOS.
THAT "GOOD COFFEE" IS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE THE FINEST IN THE *WORLD*.
THAT "GOOD COFFEE" RUNS AROUND SIX *HUNDRED* DOLLARS A POUND.
THERE ARE MARKETS IN EUROPE WHERE IT SELLS AS HIGH AS *FOURTEEN HUNDRED* A POUND.
IT'S CALLED *KOPI LUWAK*. COMES OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.
ALSO CALLED WILD THAI CIVET COFFEE.
WHAT IS IT, PICKED BY VESTAL VIRGINS?

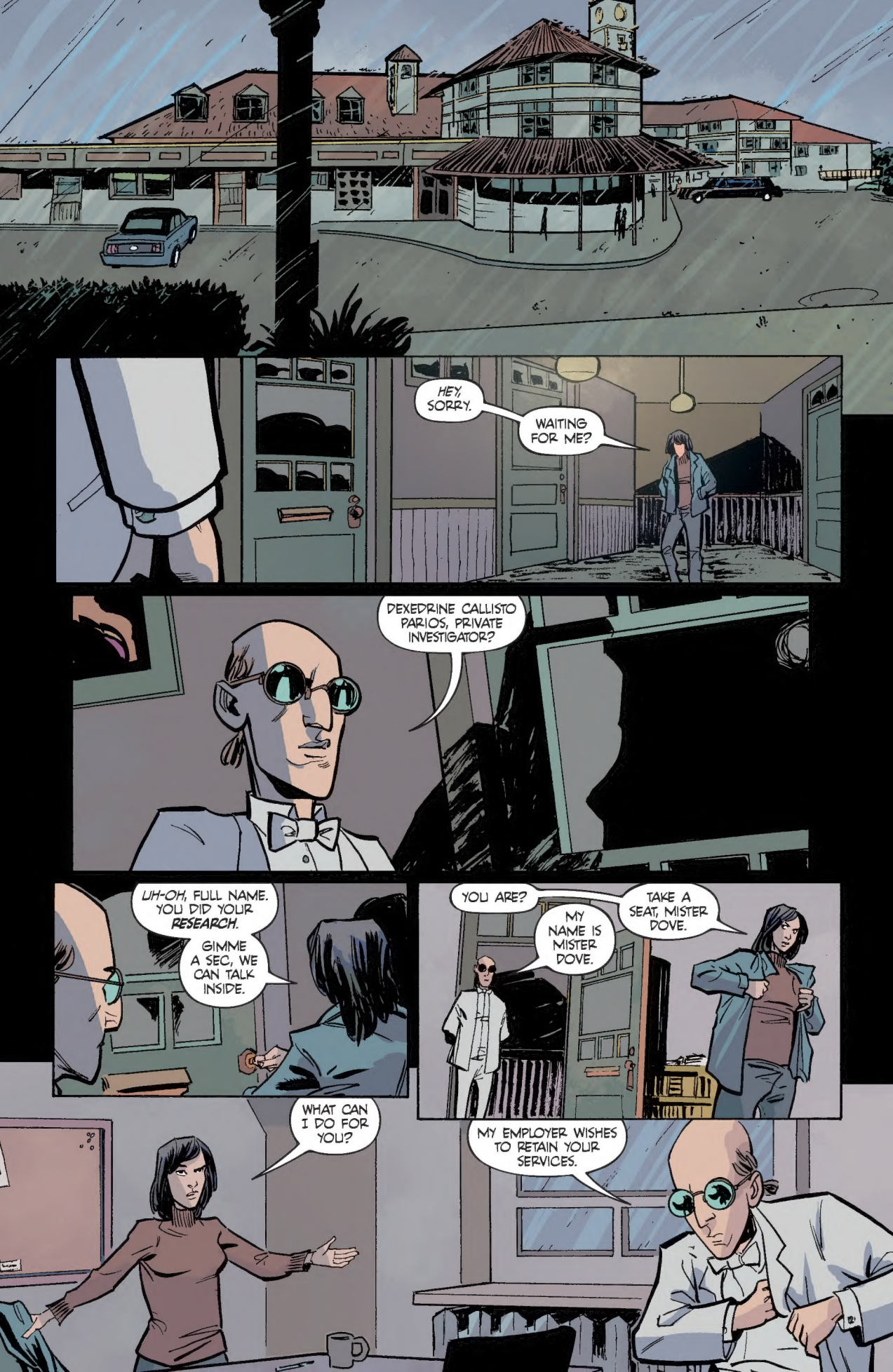
AND A *CIVET* IS...?
A TYPE OF CAT NATIVE TO AFRICA AND ASIA.
IT EATS THE COFFEE CHERRIES. THE FLESH OF THE CHERRY IS DIGESTED, AND IT EXCRETES THE BEAN.
IT'S CAT SHIT COFFEE?
PEOPLE ARE SHELLING OUT ALMOST A GRAND AND A HALF A *POUND* FOR CAT SHIT COFFEE?
BASICALLY, YES.
AND YOU COULDN'T TELL ME THAT *BEFORE* I SAMPLED IT?
THE BEANS ARE WASHED BEFORE ROASTING, MISS PARIOS.
I SHOULD FUCKING WELL HOPE SO.

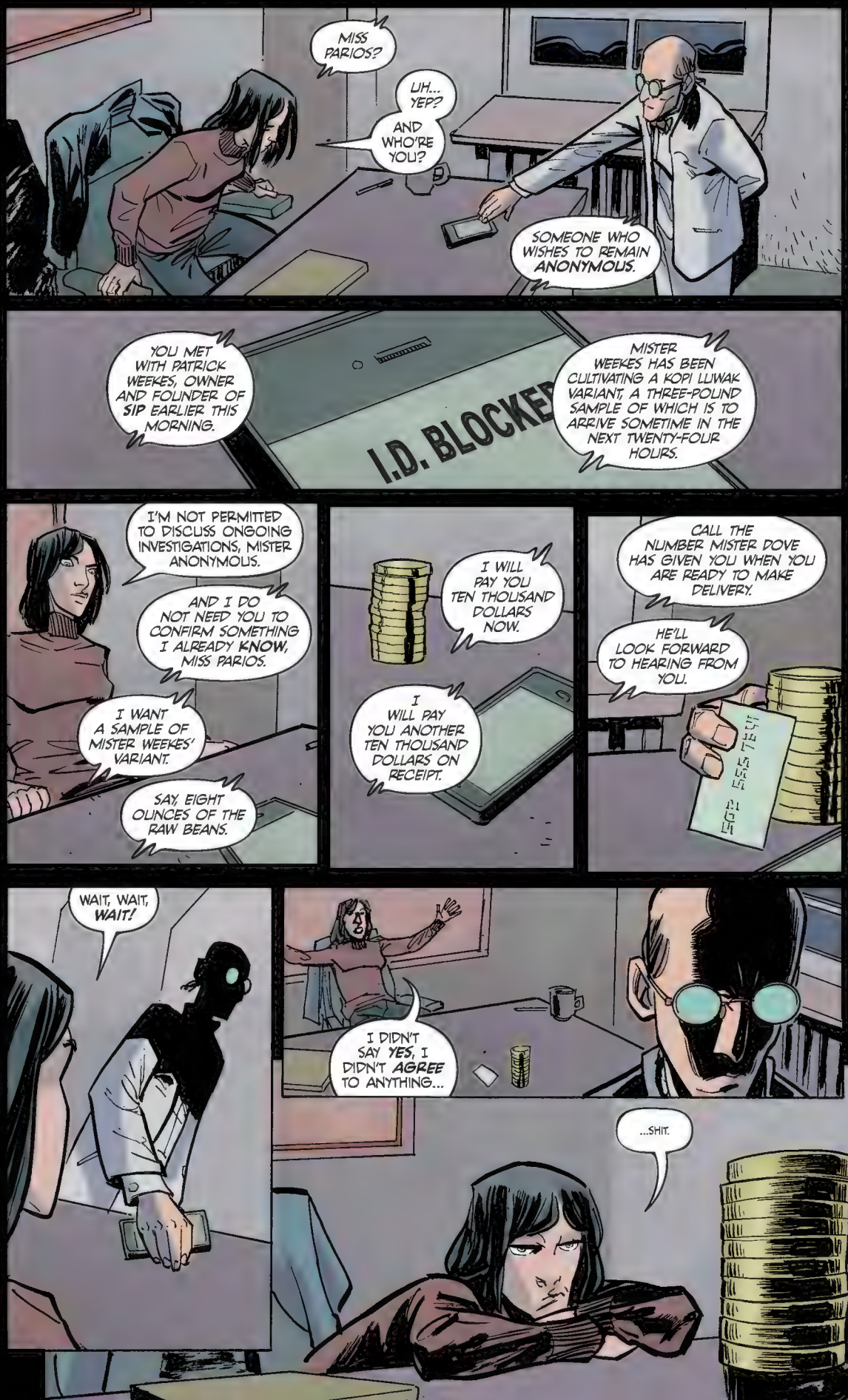
A FEW YEARS AGO IT CAME TO LIGHT THERE WERE FARMS WHERE CIVETS WERE BEING FORCE-FED BEANS.
THE CONDITIONS FOR THE ANIMALS WERE ABHORRENT. IT WAS ONLY ABOUT THE MONEY.
GREED DOES BRING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE.
WHICH HAS DRIVEN THE PRICE EVEN HIGHER.
COUNT ON IT. THERE WAS AN OUTCRY, RIGHTLY, THE RESULT BEING THAT WE NOW HAVE CERTIFIED CRUELTY-FREE KOPI LUWAK.
EXACTLY.
I WAS ROASTING MY OWN BEANS AT SEVENTEEN.
THE DAY I TURNED THIRTY I SOLD MY BUSINESS TO STARBUCKS FOR AN EMBARRASSING AMOUNT OF MONEY.
USED THAT TO START SIP AND TO FUND MY OWN KOPI LUWAK HARVESTS.
CRUELTY-FREE, MY CIVETS LIVE LIKE ROYALTY. IT'S TAKEN FIVE YEARS, BUT THE FIRST SAMPLE OF MY KOPI COMES IN TONIGHT ON A CHARTER.
THREE POUNDS WORTH. ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE.
I WANT YOU TO MEET THE PLANE, BRING IT TO ME.
FORTY-TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS WORTH OF COFFEE?
TRY CLOSER TO TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND.
THIS IS THE FIRST SAMPLE OF A ONE OF A KIND COFFEE, DEX.

WHY ME?
IF YOU'RE THAT CONCERNED, HIRE AN ARMORED CAR, BRINKS, GARDA, LIKE THAT.
NO, NO, WOULD DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION.
YOU REALLY THINK SOMEONE'S WATCHING, WAITING TO STEAL YOUR COFFEE?
I'M NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN, DEX.
SOME OF THE OTHER ROASTERS, THEY'D KILL TO GET THEIR HANDS ON WHAT I'VE GOT.
FIGURATIVELY, YOU MEAN.
IF YOU OWN A GUN, I'D BRING IT.
JUST IN CASE.
WHAT DO YOU SAY? CAN I RELY ON YOU?
AND YOU'RE PAYING FOR THIS ERRAND?
TRIPLE YOUR DAILY RATE.
I NEED THREE POUNDS OF RAW BEANS.


CAN I HELP YOU?
I'M LOOKING FOR DEX OR ANSEL.
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE?
WELL, ANSEL'S AT WORK UNTIL SIX...
...AS FOR DEX, THAT'S ANYONE'S *GUESS*.
I *TOLD* HER I WAS COMING, I BET SHE FORGOT.
YOU'RE STAYING WITH THEM?
THE SUITCASE GAVE IT AWAY, *HUH?* YEAH, FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS. MAYBE LONGER.
I'M FUJI.
I'M GREY.


--FORTUNATE YOU HAD A KEY, GREY.
I KINDA LOOK AFTER ANSEL SOMETIMES, THINGS LIKE THAT.
USED TO, AT LEAST.
SHE'S LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH A GOOD FRIEND AS A NEIGHBOR.
YEAH, WELL, SOMEONE SHOULD TELL HER THAT.
THAT CAME OUT WRONG.
OH, TELL ME ABOUT IT.
I LOVE HER TO DEATH, BUT SHE CAN BE PRETTY SELFISH SOMETIMES.
LET ME MAKE YOU A CUP OF TEA OR SOMETHING...
...WE CAN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER...

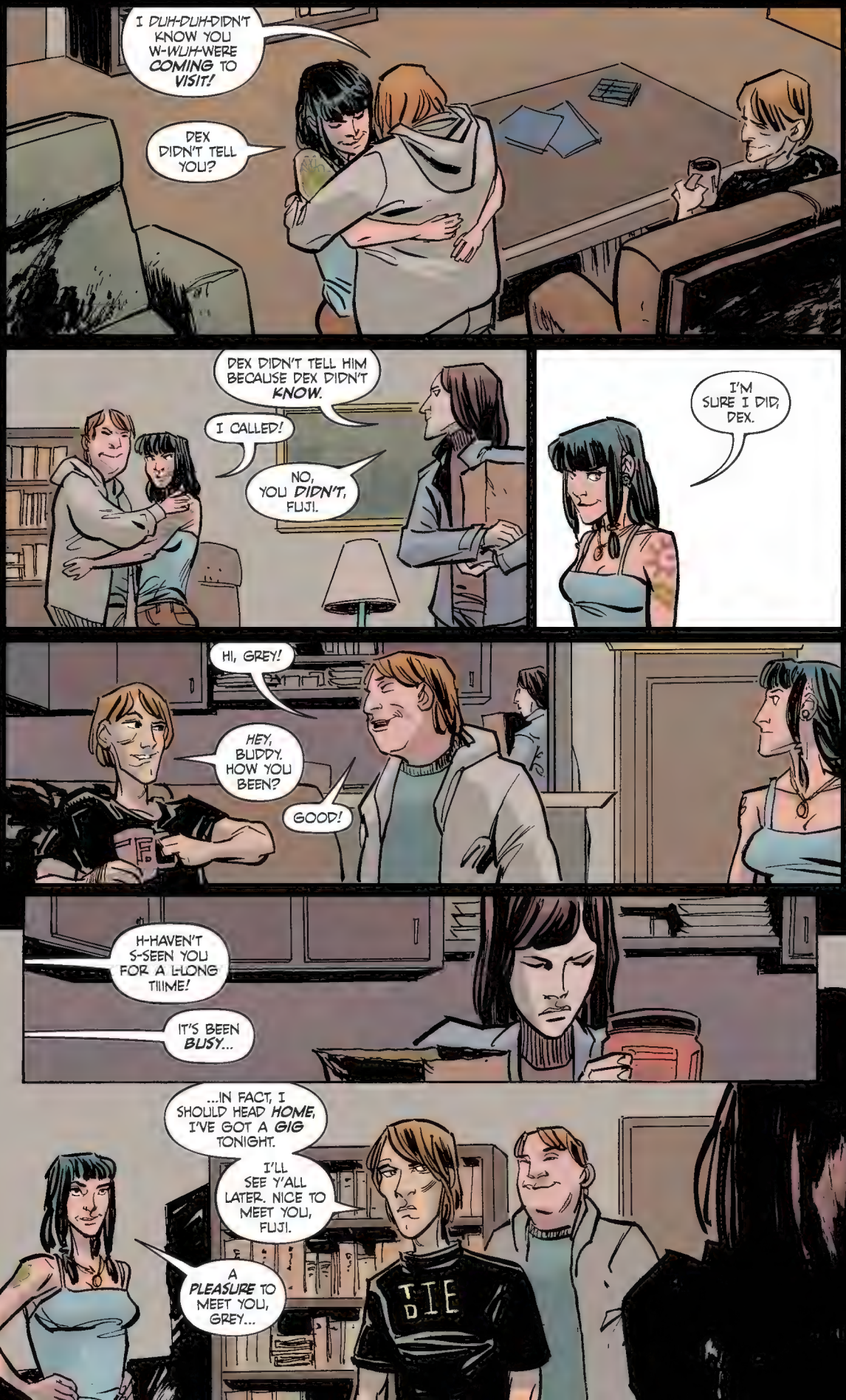

HEY, SORRY.
WAITING FOR ME?
DEXEDRINE CALLISTO PARIOS, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR?
UH-OH, FULL NAME. YOU DID YOUR RESEARCH.
GIMME A SEC, WE CAN TALK INSIDE.
YOU ARE?
MY NAME IS MISTER DOVE.
TAKE A SEAT, MISTER DOVE.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
MY EMPLOYER WISHES TO RETAIN YOUR SERVICES.


MISS PARIOS?
UH... YEP?
AND WHO'RE YOU?
SOMEONE WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.
YOU MET WITH PATRICK WEEKES, OWNER AND FOUNDER OF SIP EARLIER THIS MORNING.
I.D. BLOCKER
MISTER WEEKES HAS BEEN CULTIVATING A KOPI LUWAK VARIANT, A THREE-POUND SAMPLE OF WHICH IS TO ARRIVE SOMETIME IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
I'M NOT PERMITTED TO DISCUSS ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS, MISTER ANONYMOUS.
AND I DO NOT NEED YOU TO CONFIRM SOMETHING I ALREADY KNOW, MISS PARIOS.
I WANT A SAMPLE OF MISTER WEEKES' VARIANT.
SAY, EIGHT OUNCES OF THE RAW BEANS.
I WILL PAY YOU TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS NOW.
I WILL PAY YOU ANOTHER TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS ON RECEIPT.
CALL THE NUMBER MISTER DOVE HAS GIVEN YOU WHEN YOU ARE READY TO MAKE DELIVERY.
HE'LL LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!
I DIDN'T SAY YES, I DIDN'T AGREE TO ANYTHING...
...SHIT.

SEASONS
MARKET
SIP
SIP
Water Blend
SERIOUSLY?
I'M SORRY?
OR YOU COULD JUST DRINK MUD.
SOME PEOPLE HAVE THEIR TASTE IN THEIR ASS.

D-D-DEX!
R-READY TO GO HUH-HOME?
READY WHEN YOU ARE, ANSEL.
JUST NEED TO CHECK-OUT.
THINK THEY'LL TAKE GOLD?
YOU'RE FUNNY, DEX! I'LL G-GET CHANGED!
C-CAN WE STOP FUH-FUH-FOR MILKSHAKES?
SURE.
WHY NOT?

HEY, ANSEL?
DID YOU LEAVE THE LIGHTS ON?
MMMAYBE!
...FOR THREE MONTHS ON THE SYRIAN BORDER TRYING TO CALL ATTENTION TO WHAT'S GOING ON THERE...
...THE SITUATION IS SO MISERABLE, AND NOBODY IS DOING ANYTHING--
--ANSEL!
FUJI!!


I DUH-DUH-DIDN'T KNOW YOU W-WUH-WERE COMING TO VISIT!
DEX DIDN'T TELL YOU?
DEX DIDN'T TELL HIM BECAUSE DEX DIDN'T KNOW.
I CALLED!
NO, YOU DIDN'T, FUJI.
I'M SURE I DID, DEX.
HI, GREY!
HEY, BUDDY. HOW YOU BEEN?
GOOD!
H-HAVEN'T S-SEEN YOU FOR A L-LONG TIIME!
IT'S BEEN BUSY...
...IN FACT, I SHOULD HEAD HOME, I'VE GOT A GIG TONIGHT.
I'LL SEE Y'ALL LATER. NICE TO MEET YOU, FUJI.
A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, GREY...
TIE
DIE

...LIKE I SAID I'M IN TOWN FOR A COUPLE WEEKS, MAYBE MORE.
I'D ABSOLUTELY LOVE TO CATCH ONE OF YOUR SHOWS.
THAT'D BE GREAT. I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
DEX.
GREY.
OOOH, DID IT GET CHILLY IN HERE OR IS IT JUST ME?
A COUPLE OF WEEKS?
YOU'RE STAYING FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND YOU DON'T BOTHER TO EVEN TELL ME YOU'RE COMING?
WHY ARE YOU SO UPSET? IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.

I'M UPSET BECAUSE YOU DON'T JUST DROP IN ON PEOPLE UNANNOUNCED, FUJI!
I'M YOUR SISTER, I DIDN'T THINK I NEEDED A RESERVATION!
WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE?
JUST NEEDED A PLACE TO CRASH WHILE YOU WAIT FOR YOUR NEXT INSPIRATION?
I'M WORKING ON A COMMISSION, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
SHAFFER HAS ME IN RESIDENCE FOR SIX WEEKS, AND I'LL BE TEACHING--
SIX WEEKS?!
YOU DROP IN UNANNOUNCED AND NOW YOU'RE STAYING FOR SIX FUCKING WEEKS?
THEY OFFERED TO PUT ME UP BUT I TOLD THEM I COULD STAY WITH YOU.
NO FIGHTING.
YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M WORKING, I'VE GOT SOMEPLACE TO BE.
WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS WHEN I GET BACK.
MAKE SURE ANSEL GETS SOME DINNER.

PARIOS?
THAT'S RIGHT. CAPTAIN POE?

THAT'S ME.
NOT TO BE PARANOID, BUT YOU GOT ANY I.D.?
NOT PARANOID AT ALL.
YOUR PARENTS NAMED YOU "DEXEDRINE?"
ONLY THE LEAST OF THEIR SINS, CAPTAIN.
THAT KINDA THING WILL MESS YOU UP.
YOU'VE NO IDEA.
CHECKS OUT?
LOOKS GOOD TO ME.
PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.

ARE YOU SHITTING ME?
RIGHT...
...LET'S DO THIS.

OHH--

--SHIT!!

DUDE...
DUDE...
WHERE...

...WHERE'D SHE GO?
NOT FAR.
GET OUT. BOTH OF YOU.
HUH? NO! WHY?
BECAUSE IF YOU *DON'T* I WILL *SHOOT* YOU.
HOW'S THAT FOR A *REASON?*
THAT'S A GOOD REASON.
DUDE.
BEARDO, OVER HERE.
STAY WHERE I CAN SEE YOU BOTH.

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A GUN. I BET YOU DON'T HAVE A GUN.
ONE SURE WAY TO FIND OUT.
AW, C'MON!
DUDE!
COUPLE THINGS.
FIRST, YOU GUYS SUCK AT TAILING, I MEAN, I MADE YOU BEFORE I PULLED OUT OF THE LOT.
SECOND...
...I TOLD DOVE AND HIS BOSS NO, I MEANT FUCKING NO.
AND THIRD...
YOU WERE RIGHT, THERE WAS NO GUN.
HAVE A NICE NIGHT.

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES
NEXT MONTH...
The Case of a Cup of Joe
Part Two